

Our faith-based organizations are vibrant and strong. Our charities are doing well here in America. People understand the call to serve something greater than yourself in life, just like our policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day. And in these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I've been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people.

All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use our strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country,

confident in ourselves and in ideals better than ourselves. Abroad, we seek to lift up whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

Thank you for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:18 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Charlie Crist, Florida State Attorney General.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Sabah of Kuwait and an Exchange With Reporters *September 10, 2003*

The President. A couple of questions. First, we'll have a couple of statements.

It's my honor and honor of senior members of my administration to welcome you, sir, to the Oval Office. Kuwait is a steady and strong friend of the United States. I thank you for your friendship.

This country led a vast coalition to make the world more secure and more peaceful, and Kuwait was steadfast in your support of our common desire to respect human life, to promote peace, and I want to thank you for that very much. We called upon you to make some difficult choices, and you made those choices, and the world is better off as a result of the decisions your Government made. So it's my honor to welcome you here, sir, today.

Prime Minister Sabah. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President, and thank you, Mr. President, for this invitation and for asking us to come here. I believe that the discussions that I had with you were frank discussions, and they

were discussions between friends, people who are friends and allies together.

I would like to assure you that this friendship and the alliance between our two countries and our two peoples will continue. And it will not be limited to the official Government levels, but it will be also, and continue to be, between the people. This relationship will continue to exist because we strongly believe that it's in the interest of the peoples in both countries as well as the region.

Once again, Mr. President, thank you, sir, for this invitation.

The President. Mr. Prime Minister.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

PLO Prime Minister-Designate Ahmed Korei

Q. Mr. President, what's your evaluation of the new Palestinian Prime Minister? Do you think he's someone that you'll be able to work with as well as you were able to work with Mr. Mahmoud Abbas?

The President. Well, time will tell. I still believe strongly that two states living side by side in peace is a hopeful vision for the future of the Middle East. The roadmap is still there. The fundamental question is whether or not people, peaceful people, will be on the road.

And one of the essential tenets of the roadmap is that people are responsible, parties need to be responsible for creating the conditions necessary for peace to prevail. Probably the most—the most important condition for peace to prevail is for all parties to fight off terror, to dismantle organizations whose intent is to destroy the vision of peace.

And the Prime Minister-designee—I understand he accepted the position minutes ago—the question is, will he be confirmed by his—Parliament? And his job is, if he's interested in a two-state solution, is to consolidate power within his administration, to get the security forces under control—all security forces—and then to unleash those security forces against killers. And we can make progress if that's the case.

But the Prime Minister and I discussed this subject. He made a very interesting point, that nations need to cut off funding to terrorist groups. And I appreciated that very much. In other words, that's part of the responsibility. Israel, of course, has got responsibility not only to protect her people but to create the conditions necessary for those in the Palestinian Authority who do believe in peace, who do believe in the vision, to prevail.

And so it's tough times there now, and we mourn the loss of innocent life. But the vision is still there, because I strongly believe it's in the interest of everybody that two states live side by side in peace.

Would you care to call on somebody from the press?

Kuwait

Q. Mr. President, what do you expect from Kuwait, to play a role in the future in peace and the future of Iraq? And how

do you view this visit and Kuwait as an ally to the United States?

The President. Well, this is a very important visit, because it gives me a chance to publicly offer my sincere thanks to an important leader in the Oval Office. Secondly, we did discuss our mutual responsibilities to promote peace. I assured the Prime Minister that this country would stay in Iraq to fulfill our promise to Iraqi citizens who are desperate for peace and for the chance to succeed.

The Prime Minister said that he appreciated our commitment. He was glad to be reassured that we will finish the job and said he'd be willing to help. And I appreciate that.

Our friendship is one where we're able to have mutual but frank discussions, and we will continue our discussions over lunch. And I am grateful for his presence and his willingness to talk frankly about issues that relate to our future.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

New U.N. Resolution on Iraq

Q. Given the French and German opposition, how are you going to get a new U.N. resolution on Iraq? Are you willing to concede any control to the U.N.?

The President. Oh, I think that—we're hopeful we can get a good resolution. We're in consultations now. I think it's in everybody's interest that Iraq be free and be peaceful. And we will continue to work through issues. I don't think they're opposed to the resolution. I think you're putting words in their mouth that—they may want to fine-tune a resolution, and we're—listen, we're open for suggestions.

But what is necessary is, however, to trust the Iraqi people to—the Governing Council to come up with a timetable for elections. They're making good progress there now. They've got ministers in charge of key parts of the country. They are beginning to put in place the timetable necessary for the writing of a constitution. And there will be free elections. And that ought to

be decided by the Governing Council. These are people who know full well how best to move Iraq forward.

And we'll work with all parties involved. My call, however, to nations is, is that let us not get caught up in past bickering. Let us move forward. A free Iraq is in everybody's interest. A peaceful Iraq is in the world's interest. And I'm confident we can work together to achieve that. The Secretary of State will be going around the world urging people to make serious contributions, and I will, once again, make that plea. We expect and hope that our friends contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq. It is in your interest that you do so.

Final question, Dick—Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

Funding for Iraq and Domestic Programs

Q. Mr. President, the \$87 billion you say will be needed for peacekeeping in Iraq accounts for roughly a fifth of the domestic discretionary spending next year. Realistically, sir, how can you do that and hold the line on domestic programs without gutting those programs? Can you really have one—

The President. Of course, we can do—first of all, the \$87 billion, it's important to spend that money. It's in our national

interest that we spend it. A free and peaceful Iraq will save this country money in the long term. It's important to get it done now.

And yes, I also believe the 4-percent discretionary—increase in discretionary spending number I sent up to Congress makes sense. Somebody—I heard somebody say, “Well, what we need to do is have a tax increase to pay for this.” That's an absurd notion. You don't raise taxes when an economy is recovering. Matter of fact, lower taxes will help enhance economic recovery. We want our people going back to work. We've got good momentum now in our economy. We don't want to destroy that momentum.

But the \$87 billion is worth it. And I look forward to working with Congress to get that number completed and get the job done.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. Prime Minister Sabah spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Academy in Quantico,
Virginia
September 10, 2003

The President. Thanks a lot. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. I'm proud to visit the FBI Academy here at Quantico, where so much hard and essential work in the war on terror goes on.

The FBI Academy, new agents who risk their lives to keep America safe learn their craft. In forensics lab, experts examine vital evidence that leads to victory against terror. In the engineering research facility, special-

ists apply the latest technology to fight crime and terror. You do a terrific job for the American people, and I'm here to tell you our Nation is grateful.

Quantico is also known as the “crossroad of the Corps”—

Audience members. Hooah!

The President. —since so many Marines pass through the Marine Corps University here. I'm sure it's just a coincidence